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period in the North perhaps put some arguments in the wrong place, or at least leave some theories open to further discussion. Thus, for instance, Roethe's belief that the imitation of High German, and the consequent absence of specifically Low German forms, was an unconscious process, that it more or less forced itself on the Low German writers, is not fully substantiated. Similarly, it seems that the later period—the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—was ushered in by a more conscious effort on the part of northern poets. If the people had at that time reached a higher educational level, and took sufficient interest in official transactions to necessitate the substitution of the mother tongue for the learned Latin, the mere inertia that gradually introduces the vernacular into literary use hardly explains the change of conditions, even if coupled with the fact that literary productivity in the South was on the wane. Be that as it may—so far only theory against theory!—these objections do not touch the main issue. Roethe has certainly succeeded in formulating the problem and pointing the way that is to lead the editor of Middle Low German texts, and the historian of mediæval North German literature, out of baffling perplexities. I do not hesitate to call Roethe's work the most important contribution to Germanics within the last years. Attention might, in this connection, be called also to Carl Kraus, *Heinrich von Veldeke und die mittelhochdeutsche Dichtersprache*, Halle, 1899, and Wrede, *Die Heimat der altsächsischen Bibeldichtung*, *Z.f.d.A.* xliii, p. 333, and *ibid.* *Anzeiger*, p. 387.

H. SCHMIDT-WARTENBERG.

University of Chicago.

SCOTTISH LITERATURE.

The Wallace and the Bruce Restudied. J. T. T. BROWN. Bonn: 1900 (*Bonner Beiträge*).

ALL students of the two Scottish national epics have been perplexed by certain difficulties connected with the authorship and integrity of the texts, which editors have never satisfactorily cleared up. The present work is an attempt to explain these anomalies by the help of a somewhat startling theory.

First, as to the facts

The *Wallace* has been preserved to us in a unique MS. bearing the colophon: "Explicit vita . . . Willielmi Wallace militis per me Johannem Ramsay anno domini 1488." As Ramsay was the scribe of the MS. of the *Bruce* which is included in the same volume and subscribed "raptim scriptus per me Johannem Ramsay," and also presumed to be that of the Cambridge *Bruce*, subscribed "per manum J. de R., capellani"; and as these three MSS. are said to be in the same handwriting, it has always been supposed that Ramsay was simply a copyist. The authorship of the *Bruce* was known; that of the *Wallace* was assigned by ancient tradition (apparently never questioned till now) to Blind Harry, or Henry the Minstrel, though no mention of the author's name occurs in the book itself.

That there was such a person as Blind Harry living in the reign of James IV, there is no doubt. There are entries of small gifts to him from the royal treasury, and he is mentioned among dead poets by Dunbar (*circ.* 1508). John Maior says that he was blind from his birth, that in the time of his (Maior's) infancy he fashioned (*cudit*) a book of the deeds of Wallace, *carmine vulgari*, and that he earned his food and clothing by reciting stories—*historiarum recitatione*—before noblemen. From these facts it is clear that Harry was one of the wandering minstrels, at once poet and beggar; and this has been the invariable tradition. The "stories" which Maior says he recited are supposed to have been portions of the *Wallace*.

Straight as this story seems, there are difficulties in the way. It is hard to think that a wandering beggar who could not write, could compose and hold in memory a continuous epic of nearly 12,000 lines. It is still harder to understand how a man blind from his birth should have such clear impressions of natural objects, and such minute knowledge of Lowland topography, both east and west. Even stranger than this is his familiarity with books, such as Chaucer and the romance writers. He even implies a knowledge of Latin by asserting that he drew much of his material

1 Mr. Brown's translation. *Cudit*, however, means "printed," from which it would seem that Maior thought the edition of Myllar and Chepman, 1508, to have been the original form.

from an (unknown) Latin chronicle by Master John Blair. That a wandering beggar, born blind, and living in Scotland in the fifteenth century should attain a familiar knowledge of poetry, romance, and Latin books, would be little less than a miracle; and if he really accomplished it, it is hardly conceivable that he should nowhere in his book refer to himself or his blindness in either justifiable pride or apology.

With regard to the *Bruce*, the case is different.

John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen in the second half of the fourteenth century, is a very substantial person mentioned in a multitude of records, which also fix the year of his death as 1395. The rubric to the *Bruce* declares it to be his composition, and this is confirmed by Wyntoun, a younger contemporary, who cites long passages from it. The work is preserved in two MSS., one, as previously stated, written by John Ramsay, and one by "J. de R. Capellanus."

But difficulties arise here also. Is it likely that the language of Barbour, an Aberdeen man, would not be distinguishable from the dialect of Lothian a hundred years later? Could Barbour, who lived in the next generation, and who, as he tells us, had obtained information from men who had borne a part in the events he narrates, have made such a strange error as confounding King Robert with his grandfather, Bruce the Competitor—not to speak of other slips and confusions? Then again, there are the long extracts preserved by Wyntoun, which differ considerably (and usually for the better) from the *Bruce* MSS. All these things seem to point to a recasting of the original text by a later hand.^a

Mr. Brown's contention is that the *Wallace*, as we have it, is not the composition of Blind Harry, but the work of John Ramsay, hitherto regarded as only the copyist; and that the same Ramsay revised, embellished, and to some extent re-worded, the original text of the *Bruce*. One point on which he justly lays stress is the eulogy of the Ramsay family,

^a Mr. Brown's argument, drawn from the similarity of parts of the *Bruce* to passages in Froissart, (which Barbour could not have seen) does not strike me as very forcible. Froissart travelled in Scotland in 1363 collecting material for his *Chronicles*, and he may well have conversed with the very persons from whom Barbour had his information.

rather violently brought into the texts of both the *Bruce* and *Wallace*. But his attempt to prove that Ramsay was at least a versifier on the strength of a fragment of a little moral poem found embedded among some (printed) statutes of James III, and (as Mr. Brown supposes) inserted there by Ramsay, it amounts to just nothing; and I think he could have made a stronger point of the fact that whereas both MSS. of the *Bruce* are said to be *written* by John Ramsay, or J. de R., the *Wallace* is subscribed: "the life of William Wallace, by me, John Ramsay."

If this Ramsay was such a considerable poet, why is he not mentioned by somebody, and why does not his contemporary, Dunbar, include him among his "makaris?" One answer to the latter query might be that Dunbar mentions only dead poets, and Ramsay may have been alive; but Mr. Brown thinks that he does mention him under the title of "Sir John the Ross." He supposes that Ramsay may have held the office of Ross Herald, and was called "Sir John the Ross," as an honorary title, or to distinguish him from the other John Ramsays, who were pretty numerous. The household books of James IV, Mr. Brown tells us, prove that there was a Sir John the Ross at Court, but he brings no evidence to show that his name was Ramsay. This if admitted, would perhaps explain the "J. de R." affixed to the Cambridge *Bruce* (1487), but it would fail to explain why in the *Wallace* (1488), and the Edinburgh *Bruce* (1489), he calls himself simply John Ramsay. Another difficulty lies in the fact that J. de R. of C text calls himself "chaplain," and John Ramsay of the E text says that he wrote "at command of the vicar," showing that if the two were one person, he was an ecclesiastic, and as such could not have held the military office of herald.

Throwing aside this quite unsubstantial speculation, I must admit that a somewhat plausible case has been made out for Ramsay. But there are still serious difficulties in the way.

In the first place, if Ramsay was ambitious of literary honors, and had written an important poem which was certain to be widely read, why does he nowhere in that poem mention

himself as the author? Unless indeed the colophon, "written by me," was intended as an announcement of authorship.

If Ramsay was the author of so considerable a poem, which went into print about 1508, and was reprinted twice in the sixteenth century, why does nobody speak of him as a poet, and why, at least from the time of Bellenden in the next generation, has the *Wallace* always been attributed to Blind Harry?

If Ramsay composed the *Wallace*, and enlarged, re-wrote, and modernized the *Bruce* to suit his taste, as he was (by the hypothesis) also the scribe of the Cambridge *Bruce*, the vocabularies and spelling should be identical. A slight and hasty examination shows that this is not the case. For instance:

B uses *ane* before both vowels and consonants; W before vowels only. The scribe of B has a predilection for the initial *g*, sixty-one words in the glossary beginning with that letter, to only eight in W.

Manteme (maintain), *bot and* (and also), *cowyne* (fraud), *owth* (above, beyond), *outta* (overtake), *angyr* (misery), *ynkerly* (constantly), *abaid* (tarrying), *apparaill* (apparatus), *out of daw* (slain), *schiltrum* (phalanx), *thusgat* (in this manner), common in B, are not found in W.

W has *fewtir* (socket for a spear) and *pissane* (neck armour, camail) not in B. *Lowdyane* (Lothian) in B is *Lowthiane* in W.

Chenzies, *oist* (*oyst*, *oost*), *maiss* (*mayss*), *pusoune*, *forouten* (*for-owtyn*) in B, are *chenys*, *ost*, *makis*, *poyson*, *with-owtyn* in W.

The impressions produced on my mind by previous reading of the *Bruce* and *Wallace* have been:

FIRST. That the *Wallace* is not the production of a wandering beggar, blind from birth, but of a man of reading and considerable literary skill, in possession of his eyesight.

SECOND. That the *Bruce* has been extensively tampered with by somebody between Wyntoun's time and the writing of the Cambridge MS.

These impressions are confirmed by Mr. Brown's researches.

On the other hand, I cannot see that he has adduced any *proof* that Ramsay was the author of the *Wallace* and the re-caster of the *Bruce*, though both suppositions are possible.

I quite agree with Mr. Brown that "J de R. capellanus" of the Cambridge *Bruce* (and another poem) is not, as Prof. Skeat supposes, another way of writing "Johannes Ramsay;" but I entirely dissent from his conjecture that Ramsay used the former signature to signify "John, Ross Herald." I strongly suspect that the assumption (by Prof. Skeat and others) that the handwriting of the two MSS. is identical, has been too hasty, and that the J. de R. of the Cambridge MS. is a different person from the Johannes Ramsay of the Edinburgh *Bruce* and *Wallace*.³ That Dunbar's "Sir John the Ross" may refer to the Ross Herald (whoever he was) seems to me a plausible conjecture. I also fully agree with his views about the supposititious *Bruce*.

Mr. Brown deserves the thanks of students of the early Scottish literature for his careful examination of this highly interesting subject, which I trust will receive further investigation at the hands of some competent scholar.

WM. HAND BROWNE.

Johns Hopkins University.

PROSODY.

Studies from the Yale Psychological Laboratory. Edited by EDWARD W. SCRIPTURE, Ph. D., Director of the Psychological Laboratory. Vol. VII. New Haven: 1899. 8vo, 108 pp.

THE larger part of this issue is occupied with Dr. Scripture's article, "Researches in Experimental Phonetics" (First Series, 101 pp.); the remainder with his paper entitled "Observations on Rhythmic Action." Of these the first is the only one we shall notice particularly.

According to Dr. Scripture, these studies were begun in October, 1897. The scope of such researches in general would include not only speech sounds as material for language, but also their changes resulting from different mental conditions, such as fatigue, emotion, and the like; it would also include the study of rhythm in speech, with its application in poetry and music. The present study is an attempt to use laboratory methods for the

³ Prof. Skeat himself admits that the text of the two MSS. varies so much that they seem to have been copied from different sources. Certainly this looks as if they were by different scribes.